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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DELEGATION: 65TH
ANNIVERSARY OF ALLIED LIBERATION OF ROME AND RE-OPENING OF
THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE

[11](#). (U) This is an action message; see paras 2-6. This message is sensitive but unclassified; please protect accordingly.

[12](#). (SBU) Post requests the designation of a Presidential Delegation to attend events in Rome on June 4, 2009, commemorating the 65th anniversary of the Allied liberation of Rome and the reopening of Rome's synagogue, hosted by the Rome Jewish community.

[13](#). (SBU) This ceremony will mark the first time Italy's Jewish community, in company with high-level Italian officials, will pay a tribute to the role played by U.S. and Allied forces in restoring Jewish life to Rome, and more broadly, defeating fascism in Italy. Annual commemorations of the liberation of Italy have typically focused primarily on the role of Italian partisans, while the June 4 ceremonies commemorating the liberation of Rome have been low-key affairs attended by the mayor. This year, President Napolitano and Prime Minister Berlusconi have accepted the invitation of Rome's Jewish community leadership to attend the ceremony, which will take place at Rome's main synagogue in the city's ancient Jewish quarter. Rome Mayor Gianni Alemanno will co-host the event.

[14](#). (SBU) The genesis of this event is the desire of Riccardo Pacifici, President of the Rome Jewish Community, to re-introduce Italian youth to the central role of the Allies -- and particularly America -- in liberating Italy, and in so doing, bringing Italy's Jewish communities back to life. In a recent meeting with post, Pacifici noted that elderly Roman Jewish survivors of fascist persecution say that they were born twice -- "once from their mothers, and once when the Americans arrived in Rome." Pacifici feels a deep personal connection to the project of reacquainting Italian youth with their war-time history. His grandfather, for whom he was named, is revered for his war-time efforts as chief rabbi of Genoa to protect the community from German and Italian fascist persecution. Refusing the counsel of many to flee and save himself, he was picked up in December 1943 and sent to Auschwitz, where he was executed upon arrival.

[15](#). (SBU) Post has already initiated the process of identifying a U.S. military unit to render honors during the ceremony, and the Italian, British, and Canadian armed forces are also being asked to participate. Organizers are seeking senior political-level representation from all Allies who participated in the liberation of Rome. Post believes an appropriate U.S. Presidential Delegation is warranted due to the solemnity of the occasion and the centrality of the U.S. role in this seminal moment in modern Italian history.

[16](#). (SBU) Post believes a cabinet-level head of delegation would be appropriate given the level of representation on the part of the GOI. Post believes that Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki, for example, could be an excellent

head of delegation, if his schedule permits.

17. (U) Post appreciates Department's assistance and stands ready to provide any further information necessary to support this request.

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